THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA): (a) The total stock of rice available in the Central Pool, as on 1.11.2003 is 109 lakh tonnes.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Prices of foodgrains

990. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that prices of foodgrains are high under the PDS and poor are not in a position to afford;

(b) whether it is also a fact that due to high prices of PDS ration, stocks are overflowing in Government godowns; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA): (a) Under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), the foodgrains are made available to the Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Antyodaya families at highly subsidized rates of about 45% and 78% of the economic cost of the Food Corporation of India (FCI) respectively.

(b) and (c) The off-take of foodgrains under BPL and Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) has been progressively increasing. The total stocks as on 1st April, 2003 were of the order of 328.02 lakh tonnes comprising of 171.57 lakh tonnes of rice and 156.45 lakh tonnes of wheat.

Inspecting and checking up foodgrains before lifting

991. SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH LIBRA:
DR. ABRAR AHMED:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) what is the procedure laid down for inspecting/checking the foodgrains in FCI godowns before lifting from FCI depots for issue under PDS; and

(b) the steps taken by Government to ensure that only sound stocks, fit for human consumption, are issued for distribution under PDS?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA): (a) and (b) The procedure laid down for inspecting/checking the foodgrains before lifting from FCI depots and steps taken by the Government to ensure that only sound stocks, fit for human consumption are issued for distribution under TPDS are as under:

(i) 'Only Fair Average Quality (FAQ) foodgrains conforming to PFA standards and free from insect infestation are issued to State Governments/U.Ts. or their authorized nominees from the FCI depots for distribution under TPDS.

(ii) Samples are drawn and sealed jointly by the officers of the FCI and the concerned State Governments or their authorized nominees from the issuing lots and type samples are issued to the State Governments/their nominees for displaying the same at the Fair Price Shops (FPSs) for the benefit of the consumer.

(iii) Ample opportunities are provided to the officials of the State Governments/UT Administrations to inspect the stocks prior to lifting from the FCI godowns.

(iv) Instructions have been issued to all the State Governments/ UT Administrations that an officer not below the rank of inspector should be deputed to check the quality of foodgrains before lifting from the FCI godowns.

(v) The officers of the State Governments and the Ministry pay surprise checks of the FPSs, to over see the quality of foodgrains being distributed through TPDS.

(vi) The officers of the Department designed as 'Area Officers' for monitoring the TPDS work in the respective States also undertake visits to the storage depots and the FPSs, during their visit to the States to check the quality of foodgrains being issued.